A GERMAN ACE TELLS WHY

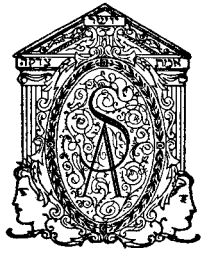
FROM KAISERDOM TO HITLERISM

BY

LEONHARD GUENTHER
PH.D. (München) JUR.D. (Bonn)

WITH A FOREWORD BY
FREDERICK MAY ELIOT, D.D., LL.D.
(President American Unitarian Association)

SECOND EDITION



SCI-ART PUBLISHERS
HARVARD SQUARE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
MCMXLII

A GERMAN ACE TELLS WHY

COPYRIGHT, 1942
SCI-ART PUBLISHERS

All Rights Reserved

Printed by
INDEPENDENT PRESS, BOSTON, MASS.
U. S. A.

TO MY AMERICAN FRIENDS —
IN APPRECIATION OF THEIR
CONSIDERATENESS AND UN-
DERSTANDING IN A TIME OF
STORM AND STRESS.

PROJECT

Why was Hitler able to obtain and hold the dictatorship in Germany? What are the real thoughts of this German people which has puzzled the world so frequently?

In answer to these vital questions, the author, who is a native-born German and who recently came to America for permanent residence, presents the following document. It contains the authentic diary entries of a high-ranking officer of the German *Luftwaffe*. This German flyer is still in Germany. The original diary has been condensed and the author's own experiences have been added. The picture thus obtained shows both the articulate and subconscious sentiments of the typical German of the better class.

Whatever these expressions and thoughts, it is obvious that it is necessary to take these into consideration in evaluating the situation, both present and future. This was the main purpose of the author.

L. G.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS

It was hardly to be anticipated at the time the manuscript of *A German Ace Tells Why* was submitted for consideration last June that a second edition of this little book would be in demand only four months after the first edition came off the press.

Perhaps some of the readers will not be surprised to learn that our first question on seeing the typescript of this little book was: "What is there about Nazi Germany that we have not heard or read before? The steady stream of books and articles has given us all the information we need."

At the same time the first few paragraphs intrigued us, as they apparently did President Marsh of Boston University and Dr. Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association. Here was a diary small in compass yet laying bare the political attitude of the typical educated German for the past quarter of a century. We here perceive the genesis of Hitlerism, the growth of the National-Socialist idea, and, what is just as noteworthy, the Nazification of the German youth, so that the diary might well have been entitled "*Turning-*

Point in the German State of Mind since the First World War."

A diary usually contains much that is trivial and inconsequential. Dr. Guenther, however, seems to present only the highlights in these eventful years. It is as if the trifles did not register. Here and there the German unconscious becomes reflected in some remark or observation; now and again we obtain a glimpse of undercurrents that are swept away almost too rapidly from our gaze.

This is not a diary in the ordinary sense of the word. The entries are too far apart. They constitute rather the private annals of a maturing and, eventually, wiser but sadder individual. The story symbolizes the backbone of the German masses who saw in Adolf Hitler a deliverer from the wrongs (real or fancied) of the Versailles treaty. It answers the question so often asked: "How could they have pinned their faith to a band of thugs?"

To the reader who is curious to know something about the author, we might say that although his identity is known to a good many noted Americans, including President Marsh of Boston University and Dr. Eliot, both of whom have praised the work highly, the fact that his relatives are still in Germany makes it imperative to withhold his actual name.

FOREWORD

I have read with great interest the galley proofs of *A German Ace Tells Why* by Leonhard Guenther; and I appreciate most sincerely the opportunity.

This brief but eloquent chronicle of the development of political thinking in the mind of a typical educated German during the period between the First World War and the attack by Germany upon Poland seems to me of great value to every thoughtful American. It reveals with persuasive candor the underlying motives and arguments which influenced German mentality through those critical years. Here is the German mind with which, after the defeat of Hitlerism, the new world will have to deal; and it is vital that Americans should even now begin to understand both why such men in Germany supported Hitler in the earlier stages of his career and why they gradually have been disillusioned.

The author, an ardent lover of American de-

mocracy, gives us a picture of Germany that should become a significant element in American thinking about the new order which must follow the victory of the democracies.

FREDERICK MAY ELIOT

May 22, 1915

Today is my 14th birthday. This nice book has been given to me as a present. I should have preferred a book about the war, but it might be a good idea to write a war book myself in these glorious days. Our teacher suggested it a few weeks ago. Let's start it right away and name it "political diary" and let's make regular entries from time to time — it's a promise.

I have just read a book about my hero, Otto Weddingen. I hope the whole English fleet will go to the bottom of the sea pretty soon as did the three cruisers which Otto Weddingen's submarine, U 9, torpedoed. *Gott strafe England!*[1] From now on I shall add these words to my evening prayer.

Our birthday dinner was wonderful; we had everything, almost one year after the beginning of the war. Your so-called blockade is nonsense, you Gentlemen from England! *Mit Gott für Kaiser und Vaterland!*[2] Good night, my German brothers at the front and on the seas. *Haltet aus im Sturmgebraus!*[3]

1) God punish England !
2) With God for Kaiser and Fatherland.
3) Hold out in the tempest of the war.

July 2, 1915

Today our class went on an excursion, and met a class from another school out in the woods, just by accident. The two teachers, former army officers, but now wounded and teaching, decided to test the military training we boys had received, and a real war game between the two classes took place. We represented the Germans; the other class, the enemy.

I was put in charge of our class and we were supposed to take the enemy positions on a hill. I followed exactly the directions previously learned; and my fellow-students not only followed the very least of my orders, but also they developed wonderful initiative. There is something amazing about our military tradition; I am sure that no other nation in the world can boast of youngsters who are almost perfect soldiers at fourteen.

We took the enemy positions although I must admit that the other class did everything to prevent us from surprising them. After the game was over, our eyes were agleam. "You are born soldiers," cried the two teachers, "and if you will further develop your abilities you may be able to join the army at the age of seventeen." But we shall have won the war by that time!

November 4, 1915

Today my father left for the Western front. He has been a military guard at a railway station during the past few months. Both mother and I accompanied him to the station. I was somewhat surprised that there was not more excitement and jubilation as his company boarded the train. Six months ago when my uncle went away there was real enthusiasm. Bands were playing, flags were displayed, and crowds were shouting. This time all faces were serious.

Mother almost fainted when the train left the station. On our way home she told me that she would try to find work in an ammunition factory. My father had been a well-paid office employee, but now, of course, he would not have any income except the few marks he receives in the army. I shall have to have my lunch with a neighbor and I shall have to do my homework at the neighbor's house too. We must save coal and wood; an announcement in yesterday's paper warned the whole population of our city to be very economical with fuel. We certainly have to do our part in winning victory for Germany. And we shall win!

March 2, 1916

Four months have gone by since my last entry. I do not know how to describe it, but there is some change in the attitude of certain people. Our soldiers and sailors are undergoing a tremendous strain and the most wonderful sacrifices are being made for our fatherland. But there are people at home who do not seem to know what their duty is.

At school I am in charge of the collection of all kinds of metal and junk valuable for war purposes. Last week I called at my classmates' homes and collected a good deal of metal household goods, and even silverware. The families which belong to the lower and middle classes gave voluntarily, and only in one instance I was not successful. But whenever I entered the house of a rich boy, I had great difficulty in convincing the people that they too had to sacrifice. After all, it is their wealth also, which this war helps to protect.

In two cases I had the same experience. I happened to call at suppertime and the people — rich families — tried to keep my eyes away from their table, as they had there plenty of everything. Mother and I have only very few things, as our ration cards permit us to buy only limited food. We do not have the money to buy the expensive

food which still can be obtained in the exclusive grocery stores. Let them have their fine meals, as long as we get our bread and potatoes.

April 4, 1916

In the street car today I heard a man say that in the public libraries and in certain restaurants one could read "neutral" Swiss newspapers. I went to the library this afternoon and read the *Züricher Neuste Nachrichten.* I do not know why our government is so weak and lenient as to permit the sale of these papers.

On one page they report that Germany will face a serious food shortage next winter; while on another they praise France for refusing all offers of peace. They quote German Social Democratic newspapers, which are very skeptical as to the outcome of the war.

I must confess that this Swiss newspaper has made me think.

December 12, 1916

This morning our Kaiser made a peace offer to the world, but the Allies turned it down immediately. It is a crime to prolong the war. Now, I hope, we shall unite, all of us, once more, in order

to defeat the French and those liars, the British. The unrestricted U-Boat warfare will bring us final victory. To hell with these damned socialists who preach peace at any price and provoke strikes, and to hell with the rich who go out to the country and pay enormous prices for ham and bacon and butter and eggs.

I do not know why our government takes these things so easily. They could prevent much pessimism if they were strong and ruthless in the enforcement of rules and regulations which serve the common interest of all of us. If I were to be a leader of Germany in a future war I would try to organize a better system and enforce equality of rights and duties.

January 1, 1917

My father is home from the front for a few months. His leave of absence was supposed to be two weeks only. During the past week he had some eye trouble and Dr. E., the doctor of our police precinct, wrote out a medical report to the effect that he had a contagious disease and ought to stay home for at least two more months.

I do not think that my father is really sick. I am rather surprised that this eye disease was suffi-

cient reason for the doctor to consider my father to be disabled. The father of a boy in my class has been sent to the front although he had considerable heart trouble.

After Christmas my father had left a cashier's slip from the most expensive toy shop of our city on the kitchen table. There were many items on it which I didn't get for Christmas. When I asked him to whom he had given those presents he became somewhat embarrassed. An officer, he said, out on the front, who happened to be a friend of Dr. E., had given him the money to buy those toys for the doctor's children. I hope the doctor didn't make out any biased report on my father's illness for the favor my father had done him. I should be ashamed of that even though I am so glad that my father can stay home for a while.

My father, by the way, said that the Kaiser's peace offer was silly. Acceptance of this offer by the Allies would have meant defeat for them. Well, I no longer know who is right and who is wrong if even my father takes such an attitude.

April 6, 1917

The United States of America has entered the war on the side of the Allies. English propaganda

has reached its goal. But what of it? *Viel Feind, viel Ehr!*[4] Those Americans are far away. They never had a regular army. They may be able to build skyscrapers, but they cannot build machine guns and they are not trained to fight. Their help will come too late anyhow. News from the war scenes are very promising. We have finished Russia. The Communistic revolution has broken out, the Czar has gone, and we can now concentrate upon one front. We have built the *Siegfried* line, which is unsurpassable. French troops, I read in the Swiss newspapers, are plotting and deserting on a large scale. The French war minister, M. Painlevé, has given out a confidential statement: a few days ago, there were only two divisions between Paris and Soissons!

September 3, 1917

We have not received any letter from my father for a long time. I do not know why the war mail comes so irregularly. Slowly I begin to ask myself whether the optimism of my last entry is still justified.

When we leave school we look at the daily war

4) More enemies, greater honor.

bulletins which are exhibited in the windows of certain stores. For a long time now we have been reading the same brief report: "All quiet on the Western Front." This "quiet" has something mysterious and alarming in it. Are these reports true? The only consoling thought is that few American soldiers, guns, or ships have been able to participate in the war.

November 6, 1917

This morning a boy in my class, the son of a locomotive engineer, carelessly tossed aside the paper his breakfast had been wrapped in. I had to clean the classroom during recess, and while looking at the paper I noticed an editorial: "Kaiser! Give more rights to the working men!" The name of the paper was *Volksecho*. It was the official organ of the Social Democratic Party in our city. I didn't show it to my classmates, as they do not like it. For the first time in my life I touched such a publication. I must confess that I was deeply moved by what I read in its columns.

The writer explained that the German people had united in 1914 behind the Kaiser in a defensive war; that the Social Democratic Party — representing the broad mass of laborers and farmers —

had later been strictly opposed to the German war aims for annexation of half of Europe and tremendous war compensation; that the government had done nothing as yet to give the worker a just share in the products he creates, that no laws for minimum wages and maximum working hours had been published; and that no general franchise had been given to the masses of the German people who were fighting the most exhausting war ever waged; and that, if the fundamental rights of social justice were not given to the German workman at once, the Kaiser and the ruling class should not expect him to fight longer in the interest of his real enemies against nations which had a much more desirable form of government.

I had never thought of all this before and I was rather upset. It is a pity that the class barriers which have governed German life for so many centuries have prevented us from getting acquainted with the problems of the proletariat. I read in our own evening paper a strong answer to the editorial. Further publication of the *Volksecho* had been suppressed for an unlimited period. I wish my father would come home from the front for Christmas. I am afraid that even I am becoming a skeptic now.

December 24, 1917

Tonight, on joyful Christmas Eve, my mind is terribly upset. This morning my father came home for a two-weeks Christmas leave. We talked things over all day long, alone, as mother had to work in the factory until four o'clock. I had to be away for three hours, true enough, to stand in line in front of the four different stores where we get food on our ration cards.

We would gladly suffer hunger and cold if we still could win a final victory for Germany this way. After all, why should we, the people behind the front, not do our job? But if what father has told me is true! The officers lead the happiest life amusing themselves with French girls; they have everything to eat and drink while the food the common soldiers get is both insufficient and poor. My father brought home three cans of ham. I asked where he got them. He looked at me a long time; finally, he said, "I will tell you after the war is over." And then he told a story about the German Crown Prince, a story which had made all his comrades furious. The Crown Prince was supposed to inspect a company of infantry, coming from the "hell of Verdun." But he let them wait for thirty minutes as he didn't want to break

off a game of tennis he was playing with a beautiful French countess.

If this is true, the Social Democratic newspapers are right. It would be better indeed to lose this war. Then let's get rid of the Kaiser and his gang and let's establish a democratic government, as suggested by the American President, Wilson. And why has my father not been promoted? I asked him about it; he simply shrugged his shoulders. His major, he said after a while, was just about to promote him when the twenty-one-year-old son of a general arrived who had to have preference. My father has finally brought home the iron cross. Thank God, I have been ashamed to admit in school that he did not have it. But father says there is no fun in wearing it. For two boxes of cigarettes, he says, one can get one from the corporal who distributes the decorations.

Good night. I am through. I do not know what to believe and what to wish any more.

May 3, 1918

No more "All quiet on the Western Front" reports. We have real war again, and victorious war! During the last few months, although hav-

ing gone through the most desperate food situation, the German armies have been able to advance at decisive points on the Western front. The French and British troops have been taken by surprise and victory now seems to be near. It is like a miracle. This victorious news gives us courage again. In two more weeks, I read in tonight's paper, our troops will be on the outskirts of Paris. And at home, there are certain indications that the Kaiser will grant social reforms. Isn't it surprising that American help has not become effective yet? French and English statesmen are simply screaming across the ocean. Let's only hope that this help will come too late.

By the way, I shall be seventeen in two weeks and may become liable to military service under the new military law. Then both my father and I shall be at the front. Poor mother!

October 4, 1918

Tomorrow morning an army officer will address our class and afterwards accept volunteers. There is no doubt that he will take me because of my wonderful record in gymnastics, and war games, and the patriotic auxiliary service I have already rendered to Kaiser and Reich. My mother

has wept all evening. She has implored me not to risk my life for the criminals in the German government. Everywhere, in the factory, in the stores, and on the street while standing in line waiting for food and coal, people tell one another that this war is lost. During the last months enormous masses of fresh American soldiers, ammunition, guns, and tanks must have been landed in Europe and are probably pounding our brave soldiers.

Mother doesn't see any hope for a victory and she says it would be a crime to let me go and be slaughtered. I didn't know what to do. Finally we found a way out. I promised her not to volunteer until the end of the year. If we have lost the war by then she will have been right. But if we are able to hold out two more months, then, I think, nobody, not even my mother, should hold me back from my most sacred duty. It will make a bad impression tomorrow in class if I do not volunteer. That's the worst of it.

November 10, 1918

Our Kaiser has escaped to Holland! The war is lost. My mother was right. The news of the Kaiser's shameful flight has stunned me. Why did

he not die in action? For four years millions died for him.

This was an unfair game. Almost the whole world was against us. Why did we know so little about America, her resources and industrial power? We should have known all this before. We have been taught a lesson.

The war is over; let's hope that father will come home well and can go back to his old job. And then let's hope that the American President, Wilson, keeps his solemn promise to try to obtain for us an honorable peace. We shall keep on fighting for our beloved Germany. The Kaiser and his gang will never be permitted to come back, but Germany will be honored again among the nations of the world.

January 11, 1923

For a long time I haven't written in my diary. Grave years lie behind us, but Germany is still alive. The last years have taught me, among other things, to learn the truth about the mistakes we have made, and the faults we have had. We Germans were certainly no angels. We shall have to work hard and we shall have to undergo certain changes. We shall have to correct some of our

hereditary faults, we shall have to be patient with other nations and it will take a long time to overcome the prejudice which others feel against us and which may be justified to a certain degree. My friends and I have even supported our new social democratic republican government although we do not agree with many points of its program. We have endorsed its policy of complying with the most ridiculous paragraphs of the Versailles decree, which I can never call a treaty. We all see the first indications of an approaching union of all nations of the world.

This morning, through the hatred and shortsightedness of French politicians, all the work that had been done to bridge over the German-Allied controversies has been foolishly destroyed. As the German government was unable, at the present time, to pay all the tributes imposed upon our exhausted nation, and asked for more time to pay off its debts, French and Belgian troops marched into the Ruhr territory to the tunes of their national anthems and patriotic hymns. Even negroes, from Africa, will make up part of the army of occupation. They will have quarters in the homes of our German brothers and sisters; and our women and children — as we are a powerless and defense-

less nation — will be subject to possible insults from those black soldiers.

Promoters of the doctrine of revenge in our own country are jubilant and triumphant. "There you are with your peaceful and obedient coöperation with the democracies," they shout. "Now you see what the spirit of international reconciliation has brought to our poor people!"

April 4, 1923

I shall graduate from the university in a few weeks; and I am very glad. I certainly am a patriot. I am not entirely in sympathy with the men of our social democratic government, and I would do many things differently. But I still prefer the present regime to the Kaiser and to the snobbish and autocratic rule of his conservative aides.

The Germans are a peculiar people. So many of my classmates were for liberalism and personal freedom; and now, since we have been given these rights, they keep aloof from the man in the street, they ridicule the government as a government of former laborers, and they call the new flag, a tri-color from the revolution of 1848, "black-red-mustard." It is a foul attitude; after all, the Social Democrats have kept us from Com-

munism and from disintegration. It is criminal to raise internal discord at a time when the whole nation should stand together defending its very existence against our enemies outside Germany, who still seem to be at war with us. The head of our university law school, in a public lecture, expressed a doubt that the German Republic has come by its power through fair and legal means. He said: "The revolution of November 1918 was a crime, but not the legal basis for a new government."

It is surprising that the government doesn't do anything regarding such public statements. Apparently it cannot risk applying any forceful measures until it has enough genuine supporters in important positions.

September 2, 1923
Bozen, South Tyrol

Before starting my first job as an assistant engineer I spent two wonderful weeks of vacation in Italy, or, better, in Austria. It is a great crime that this beautiful South Tyrol had to come under Italian rule. One has only to look into the faces of these peasants who have been Germans and nothing but Germans for a thousand years. Every-

where else, in Upper Silesia, in Czechoslovakia, and in Alsace-Lorraine, there has been at least a high percentage of other nationalities. Here, one of the most genuine and most beautiful regions has been taken away from our powerless cousin, Austria. It is heart-breaking to see how these people and their children are forced to become Italians, how they have to speak Italian in school. They are asking us: will you bring us freedom some day? They are living under dictator rule, afraid to speak out their thoughts; and many of them have been arrested for courageous resistance to the foreign conqueror, Mussolini, whose disgusting picture has to hang on the walls of German houses. I hope the day will come when this genuine German territory will be reunited with Germany.

December 6, 1923

Once again we have passed a tragic point in our history, and for generations to come, one word will be hated by everybody: the word "inflation." I do not have to write into my diary the causes for this terrible economic situation. Our passive resistance against the occupation of the Ruhr territory, our backing of the financial strike of the Ruhr industry, led to a tremendous increase in the

circulation of our paper money, and every foreign and domestic confidence in the German Mark disappeared. Once more our people had to go through a terrific strain of nervous excitement. People saw the results of a gainful life of success disappear. Racial hatred grew. Gentiles and Jews accused each other of unfair speculation. Now our poor, politically-uneducated nation once more accuses the present government, not the Kaiser's regime, of having caused the disaster. We seem to have gone through the worst of it by now; the German Mark has been stabilized. For one billion paper Marks one gets one new Gold Mark.

The coming months will have to teach us what influence this most brutal postlude of the war will have upon all of us. This year our food situation has been even more difficult than in 1918 and doctors report once more a terrific increase in the death rate. Last Sunday our pastor said in church: "The hand of the eternal judge seems to press heavily upon our nation."

I almost forgot to record that a certain Adolf Hitler has risked a "Putsch" in Munich. He was taken prisoner and will face trial. It is really silly for an obscure man to try to start a revolution, when the really strong forces of the old conservative opposition are not able to get the power back.

From Kaiserdom To Hitlerism

February 15, 1924

Although I have been in business only six months, I have already had a very bad experience. Yesterday representatives of our workers and employees declared that they were going on strike today as the management would not accept their demands for a 10% increase in wages. Comparing the wages of our factory with those of other concerns I must confess that the wages we are receiving are perfectly normal. We have six large locomotives to build, and enormous sums of money will be lost if the strike continues longer than a few days. I told this to a few of the workers, but they laughed at me and ridiculed my university training. One of them said: "The management will think twice before they will deny our claims." Have these people no feeling for the common interest? Do they have to exaggerate their demands after they have gained their rights, which, true enough, have been unjustly denied them for centuries in the past?

This morning, I and some other employees, tried to go to work in spite of the announcement of last night. A great number of pickets were posted at the entrance door to the factory yard. They prevented us from walking in. An older

worker told me: "Listen to reason, young friend. We may insist that you be laid off if we finally win. Go home and take it easy."

Thus I had to go home; and desperately I take this book to put my angry thoughts on paper at a time of day when I and all my fellow workers should be working and not deepening class barriers.

April 26, 1925

I have not touched this book for more than a year. I have been bitterly disappointed in unfortunate political developments. Today, the Kaiser's friend, old *Generalfeldmarschall,* von Hindenburg, has been elected Reichspresident by the majority of the German nation. Now we may definitely say: "Goodbye, Republic, goodbye, democracy." In no time the Kaiser will be back. But then I shall go to the street-barricades and fight!

September 26, 1925

I have to apologize to Reichspresident von Hindenburg. If everybody would protect our democratic constitution and the rights of the work-

ing classes, and if everyone would think only of the common good of all, as the old hero does, and not the benefit of the individual, Germany would rise again out of the darkness toward a golden and prosperous future. Hats off to Hindenburg, the man who is sacrificing the quiet evening of his life, to which he is entitled after fifty years of duty and strain in the service of the Fatherland. His glorious example shows that people definitely can be generous in their political belief, that understanding of the other fellow's viewpoint and a political and ideological broadmindedness will bridge over the silly mutual fight of our too-many political parties. When will the day come when one great national and socialistic party will unite all Germans?

October 3, 1925

One may say anything against the Kaiserreich, but in one respect credit must be given the old imperial Germany: there was honesty and no extravagance in the government, and corruption was impossible. Now we have gone through the terrific Barmat scandal, which finally led to the conviction of a crook who had been able to obtain a credit of 34 million goldmarks from public banks,

bribing leading politicians. The trial was the longest in German law history; it took 198 days.

Wherever we walked through German communities our poor Germany has built and is still building beautiful and costly office buildings for the civil service employees of the present regime, especially where the Social-Democrats rule the city governments. We claim to be an exhausted nation but there money is being spent with lavish hand. Has political corruption to be so closely tied up with democratic government? Is there no genuine democracy? Many people begin to speak of the good old times when there was honesty and economy in the political administration. I cannot blame them for such talk, which, of course, can become very dangerous.

June 21, 1926

Today in a special general vote of the whole German population, it has been decided that all the millions which Kaiser, kings, and archdukes, dukes and princes, called their "own" would not be confiscated or used in the common interest of all the people but left to them, although the German people lost every single penny in war and inflation. This money should have been used to pay

off a part of the reparations. I never had any sympathy for the pressure brought by the reparations commission upon the German people, but today I must admit that the German people have no right to refuse payments for damage done in Belgium and in France until they pay off every single penny to those noble and fine gentlemen who never worked and who had their regular six-course dinners in safety while their subjects died by the millions in the trenches.

Something happened to me this afternoon which is typical. Today, I was away from home in the Southern part of Germany on a business trip and I presented my ballot to the official in the voting booth. He raised all possible objections, trying to prevent me from voting, as he apparently thought that I was going to vote for the expropriation bill. The Kaiser parties had given out the command: "Stay away from the voting machine!" A fine way to influence people in a democracy. Apparently they wanted to intimidate anyone who was dependent upon a conservative "boss". And the result has shown that the practice was successful. What a shame! And we still call this democracy!

November 6, 1926

Why is our government so badly advised and why does it make mistakes over and over? Standard laws, declaring high minimum wages for every type of work are certainly well and good for big factories and large corporations, but what should the small business owner and craftsman do if he employs only one or two employees, and has to pay 100% more wages than before without being able to increase the price of his product?

Thousands of small — and from a social and economic viewpoint very important and desirable — businesses disappear now and both employer and employee join the army of the "unemployed" and obtain insurance benefits. Why does the Social Democratic Government not introduce flexible laws which could be adapted to the various needs of the different types of industry and commerce? By their stupid inactivity the Social Democrats lose millions of voters. One day in the future they will have a terrible awakening.

Is it necessary for newspapers to display pictures of former workingmen, now occupying high governmental posts, in full dress before champagne glasses? I know, that there must be some representation of the German government at offi-

cial banquets, but what does the uneducated worker think of it? Today I watched a group of our factory men looking at such a picture. One of them said: "Look at comrade L.! When he was my foreman in the good old times, he didn't drink champagne."

January 27, 1927

The past few hours have definitely destroyed my confidence in the German people. I am almost too excited to write down my thoughts in logical sequence.

The Government is making a tremendous effort to get the backing of a majority of the thirty political parties we now have. This morning, a new strike broke out in our factory as our laborers again want an increase in wages. And tonight in our local engineering association I had to listen to an address celebrating the Kaiser's birthday! After the speech delivered by our club president the old imperial national anthem was played. The musicians, social-democratic union men, played it with enthusiasm. Almost everybody joined in the "hurrah" for the deserter from Doorn. Finally a greeting was wired to him.

I left the association earlier than my other col-

leagues intending to give up my membership. My father has just warned me not to do it. He said: "You have to do as the Romans do if you still want to hold your fine position and to climb up in the ranks of your profession." He reminded me of the story which is being told about King August of Saxonia, who, leaving his capital in November, 1918, and going into exile was cheered and greeted at the railway station by a large crowd. He turned to them and said: "And you call yourselves Republicans?" I think father is right. Let's do as the Romans do. But there is no reason any more for a political diary if one is forced to give up one's political ideals in order to keep one's position. Goodbye my little book. I might open you again when our foolish German people will have "awakened". *Wann wird der Retter kommen diesem Lande?*[5]

September 30, 1931

I certainly made true my resolve of four and a half years ago. No entries have been made in this diary. Today I read it all over again. As I believe that we are about to enter an entirely new

5) "When will a Savior come to deliver our country?" Popular quotation from the famous German play, *Wilhelm Tell*, by Schiller.

phase of our national life I shall make more frequent entries from now on.

This morning I was called to the office of the president of our factory, and told that ten employees in my department would have to be laid off with six weeks' notice. Upon my question whether there would be no hope to keep those faithful men on the payroll, the president simply answered that business was worse than bad, that the foolish policy of the creditor countries had exhausted all Germany, that the consequences of this policy now had caused a world wide economic crisis, and that only drastic measures could save our factory from closing its doors.

This afternoon, when I handed the letters containing the six weeks' notice to those ten men I could hardly look into their eyes. What did my consoling words mean to them? They knew they couldn't get other jobs. They knew that a desperate and miserable life would replace the happiness they had enjoyed.

In the evening a feeling of curiosity which I can hardly describe made me go to one of the mass-meetings where the new star on the political firmament, Adolf Hitler, was to speak after his release from his very short imprisonment. In a hall illu-

minated by torch light and steadily thundering from the applause of a clique of sworn followers, I listened to a really fascinating speaker, and I knew only too well that his demagogic phrases, dealing with the destruction of the present democratic regime, would win him the hearts of many of the disappointed and desperate men and women I noticed around me. May God protect us from this demagogue. If he should win his political campaign, we may say goodbye to German science and German art, to German justice and honesty.

When I left the hall, I met several of the men who had been laid off today. They seemed to be deeply influenced by what they had seen and heard during the past two hours. One of them shouted at me: "We shall be back soon as bosses." I must confess that I was shocked and disappointed. This man had been an obedient and honest worker for many years, a World-War veteran. But the loss of his job and the "wisdom" he had just learned from this new political leader had turned him into a radical. Shall we be able to stop this Adolf Hitler while there is still time to do it? Will the politicians of the other nations, will our own capitalists, notice that we are heading toward destruction with our eyes open?

From Kaiserdom To Hitlerism

October 11, 1931

Last night, Reichspresident von Hindenburg received Adolf Hitler in audience for the first time. Today the forces of the Kaiserparties, representatives of the German World-War veterans, big business men, and Adolf Hitler have met in the little town of Harzburg. In these two days, history has been made. Adolf Hitler, the Nationalsocialist, has been more or less accepted as the popular leader of the opposition forces by the old conservative parties and has made an alliance with these forces. It reminds me of two bad boys who do not like one another but unite in order to make trouble for the teacher. The teacher is Dr. Heinrich Bruening, that religious Catholic, who certainly is a fine scholar, and a good economist; a man who wants the best for Germany, who is honest, and who can be trusted, but who is too dogmatic, and who lacks popularity among the masses, especially among the Protestants. Bruening talks about democracy, but he himself has practically given up the democratic system. He rules like a dictator. There is no longer any parliamentary system in effect. On the other hand, he is not dictator enough to suppress those obstructive forces which have now united for the first time

in German history in order to blow out the weak light of the Weimar republic.

December 8, 1931

Bruening has made another decisive mistake. Apparently, he is not a great psychologist. Instead of making friends, he makes almost everybody hate him. He has lowered all rents 10% — thus the landlords hate him. He has lowered the wages of civil service employees and of many other workers — hence all these people hate him. He has lowered the rates of interest — thus the rich people hate him. And he has lowered the price of all commodities, hence the businessmen hate him. Practically everybody dislikes him. Nobody tries to understand that only such emergency measures may save us from the worst — from Hitler. Bruening makes the fundamental mistake of over-estimating the political education of the German people. Neither he nor his political friends seems to be able to carry on a nationwide campaign of popular propaganda for the democratic ideology. They also underestimate the importance of the radio. Hitler and his advisers, on the other hand, speak every single day over different radio stations. The men of our government are silent,

giving the impression everywhere that they consider Adolf Hitler not important enough to contradict publicly.

I am very much concerned about the final outcome of this political situation. Hitler may be our leader sooner than anybody expects. Well, Marie, my young wife, would like it, although I try my utmost to convince her that all of us will be ruined if Hitler comes to power. She says: "Let's give him a chance. It cannot be any worse." That is now the attitude of many many people.

April 10, 1932

For a second time Hindenburg has been elected Reichspresident. He has won a 19/13 majority against Hitler. Hindenburg did not support the Hitler party or the old conservative party; he supported the Bruening government. Thus the old hero has shown another great example of faith toward the republican constitution to which he has sworn allegiance.

If there were a better economic situation, if German employers and the democracies outside of Germany would make some sacrifices before it becomes too late, even at this late time Germany could still be saved. Sacrifices and generosity in

political thinking by the good and loyal democratic forces, following Hindenburg's glorious example, could still lead us out of the dangerous neighborhood of the Hitler doctrine. But will the people have common sense enough to get together and to work together, despite differences in political opinions, or will they again let things go and hope for the miracle?

January 16, 1933

I have hesitated to make entries into this diary for eight months. These poor people can never be happy any more. An unfortunate chain of circumstances will never permit Germany to be a united nation, brother will always fight brother, whether the feudal lord fights against the poor peasant, the modern employer against the workman, the Protestant against the Catholic, the Gentile against the Jew.

I let things go as they will. I have had to promise Marie not to participate in political life and even to refrain from expressing my personal views in private. It would have been too beautiful to build a great peaceful democratic Germany and to bring the blessing of German culture and science to the whole world. But this seems to be a dream which cannot be realized.

From Kaiserdom To Hitlerism

January 30, 1933

This noon Adolf Hitler has been appointed chancellor of Germany by Reichspresident von Hindenburg. I am closing my diary.

March 21, 1933

Am I in possession of my mind, am I still myself? What is this Hitler doing to me, to all Germany? We have just returned from the illuminated streets of our city and behind us we have left a jubilant and happy crowd celebrating that German unity about which I wrote so often in my diary and which has been reached now after a thousand years of desperate struggle.

It is like a dream. Class barriers seem to be bridged over. The whole day has been full of a wonderful nationwide musical program. This Hitler seems to be a fanatic lover of music and arts. And I seriously believe now that we have done injustice to this man. Certainly, he will not put into effect all the ideas of his book *Mein Kampf*. He will also admit the constructive criticism of both the old conservatives and of big business, and even the regrettable laws against our Jewish population will be confined to a few cases. All Jewish

World-War veterans and all the older people, as well as all Jewish businessmen, will be able to continue their work. Hitler solemnly promised all this to our venerable hero, the Reichspresident von Hindenburg, this noon, in the wonderful act of rededication in Potsdam, where the new and the old Germany joined for the great work of a free, happy, and peaceful future.

If there are minor shadows on the clear and wonderful picture, we have to accept them. If Hitler had done nothing else but unite all Germans, he would go down in history as a hero. I even apologized to Marie, who is so happy.

Our workers who had to be discharged two years ago are back in the factory. Although we have no particular work for them at the present time, the management has taken them back under the overwhelming pressure of nationwide patriotism, definitely hoping that we shall find constructive work in no time at all. The eyes of these fellows were bright. They were not resentful at all as they told me tragic stories about their unemployment during the past years.

Sometimes, I confess, I still have the feeling that all this excitement and glamour is not genuine, that this is a house of cards which any storm may

blow down. Everything has come too suddenly. But Marie implores me to refrain from pessimism in such wonderful moments of national strength and unity. Hitler has offered his generous pardon to all his political enemies — except the Jews — and he says that not hatred but brotherly love only will govern the fate of future Germany.

May 1, 1933

I remember the first of May as a day which always stressed the class barriers. In school and university a few students would stay away; and they would be ridiculed the next morning as "Reds". The same held true for our factory workers, who never knew whether they could or should celebrate the socialistic holiday.

Adolf Hitler, our leader, has made the first of May the holiday of labor. In labor he includes the president of the large corporation and the unskilled workman, the farmer and the civil service employee. Both labor unions and employers' associations have been dissolved. No strike or lockout is now possible. All these problems will be handled by the newly founded "Labor Front", which now comprises capital and labor in one great organization.

Today we all marched along the streets of our city, endless columns of working people, including the managers. It was a real demonstration of unity and if this unity lasts, I think, we shall have won the battle for "bread and freedom." This was the subject of Hitler's speech which we all were listening to on the big parade grounds where the final demonstrations took place.

When we gathered in the factory yard in the morning there was a surprise for all of us. The president of our corporation first assisted our youngest apprentice in hoisting the flag, and then announced that the first holiday of labor would be celebrated by giving a week's salary to every workman as a special bonus. This request had been made by Hitler personally a few days ago and big business gladly accepted the suggestion. What one strong man can do! Marie will buy a new dress with the money. She is terribly excited and wants me to hang a picture of Hitler in our living room. Hitler certainly is a great psychologist ! ! !

July 18, 1933

The peaceful program of finding constructive work for everyone makes quick progress. This totalitarian form of government allows every-

thing to be done in a uniform and very rapid way. There is no red tape involved. The "Labor Service" has been created and hundreds of thousands of idle young men, walking the streets until now, will be trained as workers, will get wholesome food and education too. This idea of taking these unemployed people from the streets has been received with enthusiasm even by the skeptics, who still are somewhat opposed to our leader. They also praise another innovation: the exchange of married women, whose husbands are gainfully employed, for unemployed family heads, who thus can go back to work. The employer has to make the necessary adjustments himself. He has been told by Hitler to have patience with those who have to be brought back to real work slowly and with a sympathetic understanding of the situation of unemployment they had gone through during the past years.

We seem to have a system of genuine State-Socialism. I am only wondering how long the old conservatives and big business people will like it. If they had done half as much for Bruening, we might still have a democratic republic, perhaps well-functioning and prosperous.

A German Ace Tells Why

September 15, 1933
Nürnberg

I was sent as a representative of our factory to the "Congress of Victory", which celebrated for the past week here in the old *Meistersinger*-city and which was the most enthusiastic group that I had ever seen in my life. It is impossible to describe the overwhelming gaiety, the both proud and jubilant behavior of every single man and woman of the hundreds of thousands who attended the congress. The organization of the congress was a masterpiece of leadership. It made an unforgettable impression upon all of us.

I had been assigned a furnished room in the apartment of a wealthy family; and I had had to share it with Mr. K. R., one of the editors of the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* formerly our leading democratic newspaper. I discussed things with him thoroughly. He confessed that he had been a skeptic even until recently, but that active participation in the congress had overpowered him, too. We both agreed that the impetus of our united people, standing behind one great idea, simply could not be beaten any more, either by the dangers of internal unrest and demagogic agitation or by any hostile aggression from without.

We certainly shall never invade any other country. We could not gain anything, Hitler himself said this morning, we could only lose. Our aims are peace. We shall fight hunger and cold, but not our former enemies. May the Lord grant that we can attain this wonderful goal.

October 14, 1933

Our World-War enemies have again done a foolish thing. They have asked Germany to abandon her regular army and to install militia forces instead, while the armies of the Allies, especially of France, are to remain unchanged. All this has been proposed within the rules of the League of Nations, and since there seems to be no equality in this League of Nations, Hitler has just declared that Germany was leaving this "product" of the post-war period. There will be a vote of confidence on the side of all German citizens who approve of Hitler's measure, and there is no doubt that all Germans will stand behind the leader in this question.

Of course, if France and England would take advantage of this opportunity to attack us again, matters would be bad. But I do not believe that public opinion in England and France is inclined

to encourage a new war against Germany. More and more people beyond our borders, especially in the United States of America, begin to realize that the sort of international politics favoring France and England exclusively should now come to an end. And thus I hope we need not worry. Hitler wants peace only, and the world begins to believe it.

January 26, 1934

A short but important entry in the diary. The political farsightedness of our leader has suggested a friendly understanding with our neighboring country Poland. A ten year non-aggression pact has been signed today between the two nations. Let's go further on this way of mutual friendship between the nations of this world!

June 30, 1934

Tonight, on the radio, I, and with me the whole German nation, have been listening to the most dramatic broadcast which I ever heard in my life: Dr. Goebbels' vivid tale of the events which happened in the course of the day with the commander of the S. A.[6], Ernst Röhm, and several of

6) S. A. is the abbreviation for *Sturmabteilung*, i. e., the Brown-shirts.

his followers. There have been rumors for a long time that Röhm was homosexual. Many honest people have been talking about this situation seriously and have wondered why no action has been taken to remedy it.

Today the purity and sanity of the high command of the S. A. has been restored by Hitler himself who, as Dr. Goebbels has told us, asked and asked Röhm to give up his sinful behavior. Röhm and some of his friends who might even have tried to set up a more fanatic super-national-socialistic government were executed tonight without trial, and we all admired the frankness with which Dr. Goebbels admitted these incidents and situations which any new government may innocently run into.

We, the good patriots, are being released from a great worry. We always had believed that some kind of moral obligation toward men who had helped Hitler win power might keep the *Führer's* eyes closed even if crimes were being committed. Thank God, this is not so. Our government even admits temporary setbacks, and by this open and frank attitude it can be certain of the full-hearted coöperation of all of us in the future.

A German Ace Tells Why

September 1, 1934
Lucerne, Switzerland

Writing this entry in a beautiful Swiss town, I cannot conceal some concern about the situation into which Germany has manoeuvred herself or rather into which she has been manoeuvred by ill-wishing and antagonistic people all over the world.

The miracle of the unity of a whole nation, following one man, forgetting all class barriers and working together peacefully and thankfully has not been understood by the world which surrounds us. I am surprised that even Swiss newspapers, which I still admire for their fine and objective journalism, ridicule certain laws and measures taken by the German government. They do not understand that these measures, strange as they may seem, had to be taken in order to save the whole nation from disaster. It is true, Germany has lost prestige outside her borders; and what's more important, she has lost world markets, too. There are reasons why Hitler enacted his racial laws, which, by the way, do not affect all Jews. It seems to me, however, that by stubbornly putting into effect this part of his program, Hitler has made a fundamental mistake. He has created enemies of Germany everywhere, especially in the

United States, enemies who otherwise might have applauded our *Führer* as a great man. What vital mistakes even a great man can make!

December 16, 1934

Coming home from our Christmas shopping I happened to read my last diary entry and I should like to invite all the newspaper correspondents throughout the world to visit the avenues and streets of our city and to look at the Jewish stores, which are still doing business as usual. Why can there be no true reporting about conditions in Hitler's Germany?

January 13, 1935

The Saar River is German again! This plebiscite, with the overwhelming majority for Germany (90.5%) has shown to the whole world that the foreign propaganda about the despotic and brutal government of the "Nazis" is false.

In the Saarland, under the auspices of an international commission, that free election has been held which, as the foreign newspapers and radio-broadcasts always claim, would bring about a defeat of Hitler if it were to be held in Germany. The population of the Saarland was given all pos-

sible information. Hitler's enemies did everything in their power to bring before the voters the most brutal and unjust picture of the National Socialistic regime. And still the overwhelming majority of the Germans in the Saarland voted for union with this regime! They did not intend to remain independent. To me and to many others who very naturally become skeptics sometimes and have not lost and will never lose independent political thinking, this Saar plebiscite is definite proof that National Socialism is the appropriate political system for Germany.

March 17, 1935

Today newspaper headlines inform us of the reëstablishment of the German army without any restrictions. In other words, Germany has struck off all the chains forged about her by the Versailles decree.

Today is Sunday, and Marie and I took our usual stroll through the nearby mountains. While dining in a little restaurant we overheard a conversation. Two men, beautifully spoken, and apparently highly educated, criticized German military conscription in serious and bitter words, and I must confess that some of their arguments struck

me. They foresaw the inevitable outbreak of a future war in spite of Hitler's promises to the contrary. Marie became so excited about their views that she might have called for a policeman to arrest them, had they not, fortunately, suddenly revealed their identity as Austrian citizens who had been educated in Berlin and who, therefore, did not speak with an Austrian accent. Marie was saved from a very embarrassing situation into which she might have been driven by her impulsive patriotism. Only foreigners are now permitted to say whatever they like without risk of being arrested.

June 18, 1935

Two factors — both very positive — marked today's political events. The government announced that the number of unemployed people has dropped from six millions in 1933 to less than two millions. What a success on the home front! And a similar success in foreign politics: England and Germany have made a naval treaty fixing the number of German warships at 35% of the English Navy, thus conceding to England the supremacy on the seas.

I have to note, however, that I happened to

read recently an interesting article pointing out that in a future war the airplane, not the warship, will decide the battle of the seas. I have, therefore, to ask myself whether this naval agreement is nothing but a clever manoeuvre of lulling the British lion to sleep.

February 14, 1936

Something tells me that the mood of enthusiasm the government always wants us to be in cannot go on forever. Germany may drive into some risky adventure some day in the future, since there cannot be an endless chain of bloodless political successes. On the other hand, all the doubts which we, the good citizens, naturally have from time to time, disappear at once as soon as we read the editorials of our newspapers and magazines. Then we realize that, compared with our situation of four years ago, we have achieved many things, especially real national unity. After all, this has been our main goal for the past two hundred years. All great Germans have striven for it, all sacrifices have been made for it, and now we have reached the synthesis of all national and social forces working hard for a great and happy future. If we are confronted with this argument — and our govern-

ment uses it constantly — any expression of another opinion dies on our lips.

May 16, 1936
on my way home from New York
on board of S. S. Bremen

Here, in the quiet beauty of the peaceful Atlantic Ocean, sitting on deck and purposely evading all dances and official events, I find the time to summarize my twelve glorious days in New York.

First of all, a word of thanks to Marie, whose sacrifices made this trip possible. We didn't have the money for two tickets. She said: "You go, dear. It is you who needs a broader horizon."

This America seems to be a country, or rather a continent, of extreme contrasts. Here we find democracy at its best and at its worst. This country should be able to decide the outcome of any future war. But America may also become a victim of her own democratic system, of too much freedom, of too much sticking to the principles of democracy. Walking through New York's streets, hearing of strikes, listening to communistic propaganda both in public demonstrations and in dangerous private conversations among highly-

educated people, and watching the influence of the "almighty dollar" in the ideology of both rich and poor people, I should not be surprised if this great nation which could be invincible, might be paralyzed by clever enemies. While we are building airplanes, submarines, tanks, and armored motorcars, the United States seems to be preparing for a life of pleasure only. I have pointed this out to my new American friends.

Following the suggestion of the steamship company I shall submit a more detailed report of all my observations to the German foreign office.

June 11, 1936

Three American friends of mine, students at Columbia University, visited us on their way back to Hamburg from Berlin, where they had seen the Olympic Games. These three boys went home as enthusiastic lovers of Germany, even of the Third Reich! Minor criticism which they expressed occassionally, was overshadowed by the brilliant impression present-day Germany made upon them. German propaganda and German genius for organization have won a decisive battle against our enemies in foreign countries especially against certain foreign newspaper correspondents.

Marie, my friends, and I have done our best to let these three fine boys leave our fatherland with the feeling that Germany certainly is entitled to a place in the sun. We had been given a generous share in the weekly butter supply of our grocer — other customers had sacrificed their own share — and several of my friends had voluntarily spent their Sunday morning in church (although they never go to church) because the boys had expressed their curiosity as to the legend that German churchlife was not going on as usual. I think I was justified in having played this little trick, as so much depends upon the good favor Germany wins in a country of the importance of the U. S. A.

September 14, 1936

Something terrible happened today. I have just come home from a neighborhood delicatessen store. The place was closed. I entered the backdoor and went to the little apartment which is located in the rear of the store, and found the storekeeper, a widow, weeping and crying. In front of her, on the table, there was a parcel-post package which, I had to discover only too soon, contained the ashes of her only son. The package

had been sent to her by the authorities of the concentration camp in Dachau and an accompanying letter said that the son had died of a heart attack.

For many foolish remarks and an unconcealed desire to overthrow the Hitler government at any occasion favorable to a counter-revolution, the son had been arrested six months ago and had been sent to Dachau. Now he was dead. He had been a perfectly healthy boy all his life. I had to do my utmost to keep the mother of the unfortunate victim from saying things which would have sent her to prison. My consoling words that brutal and fanatic subordinate officials committed the crime — I do not believe in the natural death of this boy myself — and that Hitler himself would certainly not have approved of such violence made no impression upon her. I fail to understand the policy of ruthless brutality on the part of certain National Socialistic officials. By such methods they do not create loyalty and faith.

November 15, 1936

A short, but important entry. I had to tell my workers that they had to keep their mouths shut regarding the work we are doing in our fac-

tory. We are making parts for armored motor cars, and our factory runs twenty-four hours a day, three shifts daily!

February 15, 1937

Tonight, we had the *Reichs*bishop as guest preacher in a special service in our Lutheran church. His sermon had the following "highlights" :

We have to strive for a German edition of the Gospel. There is no doubt that the German tribes which were won for Christianity in the first thousand years after Christ were paralyzed in their own religious and moral power by the foreign control of Jewish, Roman, and Greek ideas. Christianity simply has to be translated into German. The doctrines of Jesus are destined for all nations of the world. The fact that Jesus was born in Galilee makes it quite possible that he was an "Aryan". We have to abandon the Old Testament and the disciple Paul, who is especially Jewish in his teachings. Positive Christianity is Christianity which does not emphasize the death of Jesus, but his heroic battle against the Jews. We recognize Martin Luther as leader in a movement

to make the Bible suitable for the German people. But first of all we have to strive for a German religion.

After this sermon our minister gave his word of approval to this theory in a final word of appreciation. But I shall not go to that church except on special occasions, as I have lost my faith in such ministers of the Gospel. I shall pray to God somewhere else.

April 19, 1937

Today I had a very unpleasant experience in the factory which, fortunately, turned out favorably in the end. I was very lucky that this matter was straightened out so quickly and I had new proof of the ease with which an innocent person may run into trouble nowadays.

One of our elevatormen who comes under my supervision and to whom I had to give some sort of disciplinary punishment had said to another worker that he would not take any more orders from me, an "Anti-National-Socialist". I insisted upon questioning the man before our *Vertrauens-*

rat[7] and he was asked to substantiate his accusations. He claimed I had, years ago, at the occasion of the radio broadcast of Reichspresident von Hindenburg's funeral, made a statement to the effect that it was a shame that a corporal should now succeed a field marshal as Germany's chief executive.

I was entirely innocent but I remember that, at that time, I had told a few men in my department about an acquaintance of mine who had actually made that statement and who had been sentenced to three years of imprisonment for that offense. Fortunately, two of my men were able to testify to my version of the story and the fellow who had tried to put something over on me had finally to admit that I was right.

I do not know what might have happened to me if these two men had not been still in our employ. My opponent was an old member of the National Socialistic party and would probably have received higher credit than I for the very fact that he joined Hitler's party in 1931. Even Marie became excited about the incident and asked me among other things once more to destroy my innocent little diary.

7) *Vertrauensrat* — Advisory Board — a group of men consisting of representatives of both management and employees whose function it is to straighten out minor labor controversies.

A German Ace Tells Why

November 16, 1937

This morning I met the retired conductor of our Philharmonic Orchestra, an eminent artist, whom I happened to know personally, on the street. To my surprise, he hesitated to accompany me on my way to the factory. He said that I — not he — might run into difficulties if somebody should see him, a Jew, with me, an Aryan. I asked him why, since he was a World-War veteran, in possession of all the rights of a German citizen. First he looked at me as if I had lost my mind. Then he began to tell me tragic stories about the secret persecution of the Jewish population in spite of all the laws protecting them, and he told me that next January 1, new laws would go into effect that no Jew whatsoever would be permitted to do any kind of work in a German firm or as free professional man, or to have any kind of business of his own except to serve exclusively Jewish customers.

I was surprised, alarmed, and somewhat ashamed. True enough, I had very few Jewish friends — practically all of them had been successful in emigrating to other countries — and the Jewish population of our city was small; thus I

had entirely disregarded the problems which those unfortunate people had to face recently.

When I was about to leave the factory in the afternoon, I was called to the president's office. He asked me not to appear any more in public talking to a Jewish person; that the factory was entirely dependent upon business assigned by the government; and that such talk would endanger the security of our jobs.

I got excited. This was the second time within eight months that someone had tried to accuse me of anti-National-Socialistic feelings. I simply referred to my patriotism, too well known everywhere to be doubted even slightly. The president, however, shrugged his shoulders and said: "You may do what you like. But take advice from an older man, and do not swim against the stream. Do not risk your family's welfare; you have a responsibility on your shoulders."

I went home, desperate about the espionage that had begun to intrude upon my private life, upon the life of a genuine patriot and an ardent supporter of Hitler. And I was also ashamed that I had to give up principles of fairness and honesty for the sole purpose of not endangering my job.

In the evening, in our sports club, I consulted

very confidentially a few splendid high officers of the old imperial army. They had had similar experiences. I raised the question whether we could not make the army the leader of the State, but they doubted it and said: "We are soldiers and no politicians. We have already been made the most honored profession in Germany. Why take political responsibilities on our shoulders? For the present, at least, we can only wait and try to make the best of it."

February 28, 1938

Tomorrow I shall go back to my job in the factory after two months of voluntary service in the *Luftwaffe* as an army pilot with the rank of a lieutenant. As a hobby, I had taken out my license as a private pilot years ago, and since our management knew about it they "suggested" to me very definitely that I offer my services to our government. The international situation had not looked too favorable for the past six months. But now, after these two months of wonderful experience with the German *Luftwaffe* and its men I am rather confident that no foreign power will ever risk attacking us again. On the other hand,

I do not believe that Germany will make aggressive war against another country. We have a non-aggression pact with Poland, and Hitler has solemnly declared that Alsace-Lorraine is no apple of discord any more between France and Germany. But back to my experiences of the past two months.

When I reread my diary entries from the World War I must confess that an entirely new spirit, a spirit of comradeship between officers and soldiers is now predominant in our army. And this will be one of the basic factors for success in the future. The responsible leaders of the army have certainly learned from the mistakes the Kaiser made from 1914-1918.

Now the old spirit of blind obedience on the side of the common soldier is coupled with an understanding kindness on the side of the officer. If furthermore we take into account the fact that our army is both the best equipped and strongest in the whole world and that every German now stands behind one great idea — no more socialistic agitation on the home front — a future war may end victoriously for Germany. Now after having served my two months with my eyes open, I begin to understand why Hitler was, and will be, in a

position to raise his voice very strongly for his justified demands.

March 12, 1938

My last entry has shown to me and others — to my own satisfaction — that my political forecast was correct. Our wonderful, strong army has won its first bloodless victory: the *Anschluss* with Austria.

It is interesting to note that the German National Assembly of Weimar, the first republican parliament, solemnly voted for the *Anschluss* on February 21, 1919. But the terms of Versailles prevented the union of the two German nations in the heart of Europe. One of the leading Social Democrats, the president of the *Reichstag*, Paul Löbe, had always been the most ardent spokesman for the *Anschluss*. Now threat of military intervention has done within twenty-four hours what twenty years of peaceful demands before the League of Nations had not been able to bring about. No wonder that everybody, even the skeptics, hails Hitler again. Hitler's enemies outside our borders have brought trouble upon themselves by their shortsightedness in trying to keep

a great and splendid nation down. History teaches us that this cannot be done forever.

October 1, 1938

For future reference — just to continue the diary properly — I have had no time to write — I must put on record that for three months I have worked thirteen hours a day, six days a week. But we all work voluntarily and gladly as long as victories such as the reunion with the *Sudetenland* are being won, again without shedding a single drop of blood. And how wonderful it is to see how the giant task of keeping Germany united and making her strong and powerful again is being achieved without any troubles on the inner front — no strikes or lockouts.

November 29, 1938

No, no, and three times no! This should not have been done; it is definitely unworthy of a nation like Germany. Is the whole Jewish population to be punished because one fanatic Jewish boy killed a German Embassy official in Paris? Syna-

gogues are burning, Jewish apartments and houses are being destroyed, and the whole Jewish male population of our city up to the age of sixty-five has been put into concentration camps. What shall these poor persecuted people do? And this was no spontaneous outbreak of anti-Semitic feeling, but a purposeful action long prepared for by the German government.

I must confess that the last twenty-four hours have destroyed more of my belief in National Socialism than the past five years have been able to build up. What are we driving at? Is it true that all the wonderful achievements of our national unity have been paid for with injustice and cruelty? Will it be followed by final aggressive war upon our peaceful neighbors who, for the first time in history, began to believe in Germany's promises and statements? Now I shall watch more carefully than ever before both the foreign and domestic policy of our government, and may God prevent that my faith, that the faith of all of us, be destroyed.

May 20, 1939

Has Hitler lost all his good common sense, has he abandoned all the great qualities of statesmanship he used to have, is he a criminal and a conqueror who has purposely and with trickery built up a system of patriotic fanaticism that it may serve his own ambitious desires to rule Europe and perhaps the whole world? He has now occupied Czechoslovakia in spite of his solemn promises given at Munich last year, and he has suddenly abandoned his plausible theory that Germany wants nothing but reunion with her own racial brothers. How can anybody under these circumstances believe in Hitler's future statements? I do not trust him any more and I see terrible things coming.

September 3, 1939

We have attacked Poland in spite of the Non-Aggression Pact; we have made an alliance with our bitterest ideological enemy, Joseph Stalin; and today, we are at war with England and France. A second world war seems to be under way. Is this Stalin pact only a clever trick to put Russia on a

dead track, at least temporarily, in order to escape the danger of a two-front war?

I have just received my order to join the *Luftwaffe*. I feel now as if the duty call of strict martial obedience is crowding out the revolutionary ideas I had only this morning. Fortunately I do not have to think any more for myself.

This may become a long, long war. Poor Marie, she will have to stay alone for quite some time. But she has caused her own troubles, by her ardent and undiscriminating support of Hitler. I, too, perhaps every single one of us, is guilty!